

HUMOUR IN CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

Communication is a process of exchanging information between a source and recipient, it has to be mutually understandable, and requires language skills. Language is used as a tool to exchange and understand information. The use (linguistics), structure (syntactic), and meaning (semantics) of language are important in the communication process. Furthermore, common meaning, understanding or clarity in communication is necessary for effective communication.

Knowing multiple languages doesn't mean you successfully collaborate across borders. Cross-cultural communication requires mutual respect and cultural awareness. In order to work effectively with people from different cultures, it is of importance that one must possess strong cross-cultural communication skills.

Awareness of diverse cultural backgrounds and how their communication styles differ is important.

With cross-cultural communication, one must be more aware of not only the nonverbal communication where a nod of the head doesn't always mean no, a yes doesn't mean there is understanding, saying yes does not always mean consent, but one must be conversant with the use of words which will aid in a good sense of humour.

One of the important aspects of culture which will help cross-cultural communication is the right use of humor.

Oweh (2002), in his work 'Psychological Humor Theory' while answering the question why do we use humor, posits that Jokes and humor, in general, play an important part in determining who we are and how we think of ourselves, and as a result how we interact with others. A sense of humor has been an essential part of humankind and society throughout the ages.

Cross Cultural Communication

Cross Cultural Communication (undated): Culture is a way of thinking and living whereby one picks up a set of attitudes, values, norms and beliefs that are taught and reinforced by other members in the group. This set of basic assumptions and solutions to the problems of the world is a shared system that is passed on from generation to generation to ensure survival. A culture consists of unwritten and written principles and laws that guide how an individual interacts with the outside world. Members of a culture can be identified by the fact that they share some similarity. They may be united by religion, by geography, by race or ethnicity.

Our cultural understanding of the world and everything in it ultimately affects our style of communication as we start picking up ways of one's culture at around the same time we start learning to communicate. Culture influences the words we speak and our behavior.

Cross cultural communication thus refers to the communication between people who have differences in any one of the following: styles of working, age, nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Cross cultural communication can also refer to the attempts that are made to exchange, negotiate and mediate cultural differences by means of language, gestures and body language. It is how people belonging to different cultures communicate with each other.

When two people of different cultures encounter each other, they not only have different cultural backgrounds but their systems of turn – talking are also different. Cross cultural communication will be more effective and easier if both the speakers have knowledge of the turn taking system being used in the conversation (For example: One person should not monopolize the conversation or only one person should talk at a time).

HUMOUR IN CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

What is humour?

Many scholars and people have tried to give humor different definitions based on their perspectives and based on perspectives of some samples they have conducted researches on. Some of these definitions include:

Akinkurolere S. O (2013) citing Merriam-Webster dictionary, define humor by saying that it is “the mental faculty of discovering, expressing or appreciating something that is comical, amusing, or absurdly incongruous”. Akinkurolere S. O (2013) also quoting The Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary defines humor as “the quality of something that makes it funny or amusing”. From these definitions, it is obvious that humor, to large extent, depends on the parties involved in an extended communication (often interactive) dealing with some particular topic which could be in speech or writing, the onus lies on the participants to know whether something is humorous or not. Therefore, Humor is anything perceived by parties as humorous in any communication act.

When Akinkurolere (2013) mentioned parties involved in an extended communication, it is of importance to note that even though he did not mention or include “from the same or different cultural background”, it is important to note that communication can be between people of the same cultural and or different cultural background; hence it could be within the same culture or cross-culturally.

For interactants within the same culture, they would have the understanding of what constitutes and what are the things that do not constitute humor, but for cross-cultural interactants, it behooves the parties involved to be clear of what constitutes and what does not constitute humor across the cultures.

Shahe S. K. (2011) posits that, Humor is the positive emotion of mirth invoked in a social context by the

Perception of playful incongruity and expressed through laughter-related behaviors.

Gil and Geoffrey (2011) maintained that humor is an evolutionary enigma: people across cultures enjoy it with smiling, laughing, and mirth, and socially value those who produce it , yet humor production seems to yield no survival benefit, and humor's ancestral origins and adaptive functions have been hotly debated since Darwin

Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield (1991) have this to say that; within the realm of communication, humor is defined as “intentional verbal and nonverbal messages which elicit laughter, chuckling, and other forms of spontaneous behavior taken to mean pleasure, delight, and/or surprise in the targeted receiver”

Star and Jack (1999) puts that:

humor is the most ubiquitous of human social behaviors and a unique form of social activity widely recognized and admired in social life. Occurring in all stages of interpersonal relationships from initial relational development, to relational maintenance, to terminating stages of relationships, humor is a phenomenon unique to humans. It is also an essential factor to communication satisfaction

Caughlin, J. P. (2003) citing Graham, Papa, & Brooks, Meyer, Barbato, Graham, & Perse, Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield, Crawford & Gressley, Foot and Wanzer et al., puts it that:

Humor is an important skill that enables individuals to achieve interpersonal goals, and has the ability to improve the quality of life. Humor has the ability to integrate or bridge multiple perspectives and has been recognized as a coping mechanism for managing unfortunate life experiences. Humor also tends to operate as an “ice breaking” tool for soothing discomfort and for entertaining people. Humor has been known to be persuasive and negative forms of humor are associated with perpetuating dominance. Humor also has been associated with interpersonal attraction.

With the definitions of humour, it is important to note that every culture enjoys some form of humor. But, humor has difficulty crossing cultural boundaries because what is humorous in one country is often not humorous in another."

Apart from the definitions of humor by the above listed scholars, some other scholars to, have things to say about humor such as :

Shahe S. K. (2011) while commenting on the use of humor by the Americans said that: humor through a Western psychological lens is seen as comprising four essential components; namely, social, cognitive (production of humorous stimuli and perception of the humorous), emotional (positive affect and mood) and vocal-behavioral (laughter and smiling); a view generally consistent with those proposed by Arab and Lebanese humor scholars.

Gil and Geoffrey (2011), while working on humor and sexual selection posit that sexual selection offers one possible explanation for humor's origins, functions, correlates, and social attractiveness, this they maintained could be justified according to the theory of mental fitness indicator citing by Miller who maintained that some human capacities such as language, creativity, art, music, altruism, and humor evolved at least partly through mutual mate choice for ‘good genes’ and ‘good parent’ traits. In this view, a good sense of humor is sexually attractive because it is a hard-to-fake signal of intelligence, creativity, mental health, and other traits desired by both sexes, consciously or not.

Gert J. H. (undated) said that humour is universal behaviour. Good sense of humour provides playful ways of addressing taboo subjects that relate to the basic drives of people for sexuality, affiliation, novelty and dominance. Telling jokes is a way to achieve status, which is more a male preoccupation than a female one. But aside from the gender difference, people do not make the same kinds of jokes across the world. There are differences both in the process of joking, in joke style, and in the content of jokes. Are jokes subtle or blunt; are they derogatory, what are the taboo subjects? These things vary. The article provides a tour d’horizon of cultural differences across the world. It does so using Hofstede’s five basic issues of culture: collectivity, hierarchy, aggression, otherness, and need gratification. At the hand of examples, it shows that humour does seem to vary with culture. It argues that this area could be fruitful for targeted research.

Recently, a bunch of cartoons about the Prophet Muhammad appeared in a Danish provincial newspaper, Jyllands Posten (30 September 2005). The idea was to discuss self-censorship about depicting Islam among Danish cartoonists. The pictures seemed innocuous to the Danes. In perhaps the most explicit one, an apologetic imam, perhaps Muhammad, drawn in a simple childlike style, is standing on a cloud in what must be heaven. A file of still smoking suicide bombers is arriving. He meets them with the exclamation "Stop we ran out of virgins". A Danish Imam took offence, and subsequently the cartoons were met with burning indignation in parts of the Arab world. Other, more offensive cartoons were added and falsely attributed to Jyllands Posten. Danish flags were burnt in demonstrations in the Arab world. It took many diplomatic moves to calm the uproar. Why did a bit of humor cause so much trouble?

Terre F. (undated), comments that humor brings people together under shared laughter. However, since humor requires highly sensitive linguistic and cultural competence, expressing and appreciating humor is often a challenge in cross-cultural communication. What is considered as funny may differ across cultures. A humorous remark in one culture is not necessarily humorous in another culture; moreover, it might be considered as inappropriate or even offensive.

Theoretical Perspectives of Humor

According to Joseph, Winnipeg, Manitoba and Jeffrey, (2006) in *Evolutionary Psychology* (human nature.com, undated) Because of the multilayered nature of humor, no single humor theory has been completely satisfactory and thus clinched universal acceptance. But in their work; *The Role of Humor in The Construction of Satire in Nigerian Political Cartoons* Sani, Abdullah, Ali, and Abdullah (2012) said that in terms of theoretical perspectives, various theories of humor explaining its functions have been identified in literature such as superiority theories, relief theories and incongruity among others.

Relief Theory

Relief theory, which is most associated with Freud, views humor as a basic method for releasing negative energy or feelings of repression. This would include any type of light hearted and frivolous humor such as sight gags, clown antics or simple word play.

Relief theory is one of the prominent theories which account for humor in media contents particularly cartoons. These theories deal with psychological function of humor in terms of emotions and feelings evoked by humorous events. Relief theories involve arousal-relief mechanism (Freud, 1905 as cited in Sani et al (2012)). They are often associated to Freud, a prominent figure in psychoanalytical studies. Thus, humor operates through social interaction thereby alleviating sexual and aggressive tension. For instance, caricaturing in cartoons can stimulate laughter which eventually relieves an individual's tension. This process causes a build-up of nervous energy which is usually released through laughter

Superiority theory

Superiority theory, initially developed by Plato and Aristotle, emphasizes the aggressive feelings that fuel humor and states that humor arises from a thrill or euphoria created when feeling supremacy over others. This type of humor would likely involve belittling a peer, satire, sarcasm empathizing with a fool or jester.

The main concern of superiority theory is on self assertion that is the disposition of the observer and the observed who initiates humorous effects. This relationship explains how things look funny naturally. These theories focus on sociological aspect of humor in communication which studies humor in terms of behavioral and social level that is why the theories are often referred to as aggression based theories. People usually do laugh at others when they feel superior in one way or the other; that is why cartoonists use laughter from this perspective to satirize and ridicule politicians. More specifically, the major argument of superiority theory is that an individual or group of people may derive enjoyment by ridiculing beliefs of others for the fact that they think their belief is superior to those of others. Superiority theories are said to have originated from Plato's philosophical observation that people get enjoyment from the pitfalls or shortcomings of others.

Incongruity Theories

This is another prominent type of humor theories found in literature to be the most common link in humor theory (Sani et al (2012) citing Schmitz, 2002). Humor from the superiority perspectives is essentially portrayed by bringing together of two disparate ideas, concepts or situations in an unexpected or surprising manner, and this is what most political cartoons employ. Thus they create different awareness and immediate reaction for the audience based on incongruity perspective. That is why when a reader ponders over a particular political cartoon; his response is immediate and this is quite difficult in most cases to explain why it is funny. On the contrary, the weakness of incongruity lies on the fact that it does not generally provide adequate explanation of the phenomenon of humor. Nevertheless, as a theory, appropriate incongruity is quite an essential explanation that accounts on how humor operates in cartoons. Incongruity theory deals primarily with human intellect that can be used to express the absurdity of situations and events and enable audience to discern from the event through hearty laughter. For instance, it is apparent in media cartoons that the cartoonist deliberately designs it to illustrate something allegedly humorous and contrary to the expectations of audience. In other words, the audience members expect seriousness, but the visual projection of the event makes it appear humorous. Thus, displaying contradiction can be seen as atypical feature of cartoons. Evidently, these theoretical perspectives provide an insight into different dimensions of cartoons in terms of meaning creation, comprehension, perception and appreciation specifically in printed media such as magazines and newspapers.

Incongruity theory simply sees humor as a response or reaction to ambiguity, logical impossibility, irrelevance, or inappropriateness. Such cognitive shift humor is most associated with philosophers Immanuel Kant and Søren Kierkegaard. This type of humor is characteristic of the typical joke formula which establishes a belief, provides confirming evidence and then breaks from that train of thought by proving that the original premise was indeed false.

Evolutionary Theories of Humor

In *Expressions of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, Weisfeld (1993) citing Darwin conjectured, "Laughter seems primarily to be the expression of mere joy or happiness." By

comparing the behavioral aspects of laughter in “savages,” “imbeciles,” and apes, Darwin thus implied some evolutionary advantage. He did not address the concept of humor.

Weisfeld (1993) also maintained that Alexander in 1986 was one of the first to methodically analyze humor and laughter within an evolutionary context. Advancing an idea clearly rooted in Hobbes’ superiority theory, Alexander figured humor led to greater reproductive success by enhancing one’s social standing through ostracizing others.

Thus, according to Alexander, the major benefits of telling jokes are varied and include 1) raising one’s own status, 2) lowering the status of certain individuals and 3) raising the status of designated listeners and thereby enhancing camaraderie or social unity.

Weisfeld (1993) proposed a general humor theory suggesting humor provides valuable social information to others while laughter provokes pleasurable feelings that positively reinforce the humorist. In return, the humorist gets forthcoming reciprocation by putting an ally in a favorable disposition. It is an interesting hypothesis although difficult to critique given that the mechanics of mammalian cooperation are exceedingly complex and yet unsolved citing Wilson.

(Helpguide.org) "Humor is infectious. The sound of roaring laughter is far more contagious than any cough, snuffle, or sneeze. When laughter is shared, it binds people together and increases happiness and intimacy. Laughter also triggers healthy physical changes in the body. Humor and laughter strengthen your immune system, boost your energy, diminish pain, and protect you from the damaging effects of stress. Best of all, this priceless medicine is fun, free, and easy to use."

Paul E. McGhee, (helpguide, undated) also said that “your sense of humor is one of the most powerful tools you have to make certain that your daily mood and emotional state support good health.”

BLUNDERS IN USING HUMOR

Having a poor understanding of humor on the influence of cross cultural differences in areas such as management, PR, advertising and negotiations leads to damaging blunders. Neil Payne (undated) highlights the sometimes humorous, often financial devastating consequences of cultural blunders.

It is crucial for today’s business personnel to understand the impact of cross cultural differences on business, trade and internal company organization. The success or failure of a company, venture, merger or acquisition is essentially in the hands of people. If these people are not cross culturally aware then misunderstandings, offence and a break down in communication can occur.

The need for greater cross cultural awareness is heightened in our global economies. Cross cultural differences in matters such as language, etiquette, non-verbal communication, norms and values can do and will lead to cross cultural blunders.

To illustrate what Neil said, some examples of humor are provided of cross cultural blunders that could have been avoided with appropriate cross cultural awareness training:

1. An American oil rig supervisor in Indonesia shouted at an employee to take a boat to shore. Since no-one berates an Indonesian in public, a mob of outraged workers chased the supervisor with axes.
2. Pepsodent tried to sell its toothpaste in Southeast Asia by emphasizing that it "whitens your teeth." They found out that the local natives chew betel nuts to blacken their teeth which they find attractive.
3. A company advertised eyeglasses in Thailand by featuring a variety of cute animals wearing glasses. The ad was a poor choice since animals are considered to be a form of low life and no self respecting Thai would wear anything worn by animals.
4. The soft drink Fresca was being promoted by a saleswoman in Mexico. She was surprised that her sales pitch was greeted with laughter, and later embarrassed when she learned that fresca is slang for "lesbian."
5. When President George Bush went to Japan with Lee Iacocca and other American business magnates, and directly made explicit and direct demands on Japanese leaders, they violated Japanese etiquette. To the Japanese (who use high context language) it is considered rude and a sign of ignorance or desperation to lower oneself to make direct demands. Some analysts believe it severely damaged the negotiations and confirmed to the Japanese that Americans are barbarians.
6. A soft drink was introduced into Arab countries with an attractive label that had stars on it--six-pointed stars. The Arabs interpreted this as pro-Israeli and refused to buy it. Another label was printed in ten languages, one of which was Hebrew--again the Arabs did not buy it.
7. U.S. and British negotiators found themselves at a standstill when the American company proposed that they "table" particular key points. In the U.S. "Tabling a motion" means to not discuss it, while the same phrase in Great Britain means to "bring it to the table for discussion."

In addition to interpersonal cross cultural gaffes, the translation of documents, brochures, advertisements and signs also offers us some comical cross cultural blunders:

1. Kellogg had to rename its Bran Buds cereal in Sweden when it discovered that the name roughly translated to "burned farmer."
2. When Pepsico advertised Pepsi in Taiwan with the ad "Come Alive With Pepsi" they had no idea that it would be translated into Chinese as "Pepsi brings your ancestors back from the dead."
3. American medical containers were distributed in Great Britain and caused quite a stir. The instructions to "Take off top and push in bottom," innocuous to Americans, had very strong sexual connotations to the British.
4. In Italy, a campaign for Schweppes Tonic Water translated the name into "Schweppes Toilet Water."
5. In a Yugoslavian hotel: The flattening of underwear with pleasure is the job of the chambermaid.
6. In a Bangkok dry cleaner's: Drop your trousers here for best results.
7. In an East African newspaper: A new swimming pool is rapidly taking shape since the contractors have thrown in the bulk of their workers.
8. At a Budapest zoo: Please do not feed the animals. If you have any suitable food, give it to the guard on duty.

Laurie R. (undated) also said that what is funny in one culture might not be in another. Humor might be misunderstood and interpreted in a bad light. While humor is a good icebreaker, it can backfire when the cross-cultural group misses humor's meaning. When in doubt, avoid using humor when communicating with people from many cultures.

Using Humor

According to Dimensions of Culture (undated), a wise interpreter will avoid translating humor for the good reason that jokes and sarcasm don't translate well across cultures. In some cultures, humor can even be seen as aggression or dominance. Americans, because of their individualistic and confident nature, tend to do a lot of put-down humor.

They love to poke fun at themselves and others. This can be confusing for people from other cultures where close attention is paid to preserving the dignity of all people in a given interaction – in Asian cultures this is called saving face. A well-intentioned provider, whose position automatically conveys status, would confuse some families by poking fun at himself. It could easily disrupt the sense of trust vested in him or her, especially for patients from formal cultures.

Finally, in American culture, there's a big difference between a wry smile and happy smile, just as in many Asian cultures a 'masking smile,' with corners of the mouth turned down, is a polite way of letting you know what you are doing is not appropriate. Similarly, in many Asian cultures laughter can be a sign of embarrassment rather than a response to humor as it typically is in the US. Healthcare workers interacting with patients from Asian cultures need to remember the difference between high and low context cultures. Reading facial expressions, body language, etc. is second nature to people from Asian cultures, but goes unnoticed by many Americans unless they make a concerted effort to pay closer attention in cross-cultural situations.

After learning so much about humour, it is very important to get acquainted with the use of humour.

Smile which is very close to humour which may be said to bring out the enjoyment of humour may be the most universally understood form of non-verbal communication in the world. However, even with the smile, one cannot assume that the meaning is the same all over the world.

For example, in Japan, a smile can mean that a person is uncomfortable or sad. People have observed that Japanese might smile on sad occasions, such as a funeral, and find this confusing. To the Japanese, it is perfectly acceptable. To an American, this is strange. There are cultural issues involved.

Some Basic Rules to Remember...

- Each culture has its own style of humor
- Humor is very difficult to export

- Humor often involves wordplay and very colloquial expressions
- Humor requires exceptional knowledge of a language
- Understanding humor requires an in-depth understanding of culture
- Avoid the following: ethnic-type humor, stereotyping, sexist, off-color, cultural, or religious humor
- Political humor can be effective in certain circumstances
- Be aware of the types of humor appreciated by your various audiences
- When in doubt, play it safe and avoid humor.
- Americans, in particular, begin speeches with a joke. Be cautious when taking this style to other cultures
- Laughing at yourself often diffuses tense situations

The Health Benefits of Humor and Laughter

According to the helpguide (undated) Humor is infectious. The sound of roaring laughter is far more contagious than any cough, snuffle, or sneeze. When laughter is shared, it binds people together and increases happiness and intimacy. Laughter also triggers healthy physical changes in the body. Humor and laughter strengthen your immune system, boost your energy, diminish pain, and protect you from the damaging effects of stress. Best of all, this priceless medicine is fun, free, and easy to use. Laughter is strong medicine for mind and body

Paul E. McGhee, (helpguide undated) has this to say that: “Your sense of humor is one of the most powerful tools you have to make certain that your daily mood and emotional state support good health.”

Laughter resulting from a very good humour is a powerful antidote to stress, pain, and conflict. Nothing works faster or more dependably to bring your mind and body back into balance than a good laugh. Humor lightens your burdens, inspires hopes, connects you to others, and keeps you grounded, focused, and alert.

With so much power to heal and renew, the ability to laugh easily and frequently is a tremendous resource for surmounting problems, enhancing your relationships, and supporting both physical and emotional health. Laughter is good for your health

Laughter relaxes the whole body. A good, hearty laugh relieves physical tension and stress, leaving your muscles relaxed for up to 45 minutes after. Laughter boosts the immune system. Laughter decreases stress hormones and increases immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies, thus improving your resistance to disease. Laughter triggers the release of endorphins, the body’s natural feel-good chemicals. Endorphins promote an overall sense of well-being and can even temporarily relieve pain.

Laughter protects the heart. Laughter improves the function of blood vessels and increases blood flow, which can help protect you against a heart attack and other cardiovascular problems.

The Benefits of good sense of humour:

1. Physical Health Benefits:

- a) Boosts immunity
- b) Lowers stress hormones
- c) Decreases pain
- d) Relaxes your muscles
- e) Prevents heart disease

2. Mental Health Benefits:

- a) Adds joy and zest to life
- b) Eases anxiety and fear
- c) Relieves stress
- d) Improves mood
- e) Enhances resilience

3. Social Benefits:

- a) Strengthens relationships
- b) Attracts others to us
- c) Enhances teamwork
- d) Helps defuse conflict
- e) Promotes group bonding

4. The social benefits of humor and laughter

Humor and playful communication strengthen our relationships by triggering positive feelings and fostering emotional connection. When we laugh with one another, a positive bond is created. This bond acts as a strong buffer against stress, disagreements, and disappointment.

Laughing with others is more powerful than laughing alone

Shared laughter is one of the most effective tools for keeping relationships fresh and exciting. All emotional sharing builds strong and lasting relationship bonds, but sharing laughter and play also adds joy, vitality, and resilience. And humor is a powerful and effective way to heal resentments, disagreements, and hurts. Laughter unites people during difficult times.

Incorporating more humor and play into your daily interactions can improve the quality of your love relationships— as well as your connections with co-workers, family members, and friends. Using humor and laughter in relationships allows you to:

- Be more spontaneous. Humor gets you out of your head and away from your troubles.
- Let go of defensiveness. Laughter helps you forget judgments, criticisms, and doubts.
- Release inhibitions. Your fear of holding back and holding on are set aside.

- Express your true feelings. Deeply felt emotions are allowed to rise to the surface.

Developing your sense of humor: Take yourself less seriously

One essential characteristic that helps us laugh is not taking ourselves too seriously. We've all known the classic tight-jawed sourpuss who takes everything with deathly seriousness and never laughs at anything. No fun there!

Some events are clearly sad and not occasions for laughter. But most events in life don't carry an overwhelming sense of either sadness or delight. They fall into the gray zone of ordinary life—giving you the choice to laugh or not.

Using humor and play to overcome challenges and enhance your life

The ability to laugh, play and have fun with others (not only within your cultural boundary) not only makes life more enjoyable but also helps you solve problems, connect with others, and be more creative. People who incorporate humor and play into their daily lives find that it renews them and all of their relationships.

Life brings challenges that can either get the best of you or become playthings for your imagination. When you “become the problem” and take yourself too seriously, it can be hard to think outside the box and find new solutions. But when you play with the problem, you can often transform it into an opportunity for creative learning.

Playing with problems seems to come naturally to children. When they are confused or afraid, they make their problems into a game, giving them a sense of control and an opportunity to experiment with new solutions. Interacting with others in playful ways helps you retain this creative ability.

As laughter, humor, and play become an integrated part of your life, your creativity will flourish and new discoveries for playing with friends, coworkers, acquaintances, and loved ones will occur to you daily. Humor takes you to a higher place where you can view the world from a more relaxed, positive, creative, joyful, and balanced perspective.
More help for health and happiness

(LAUGH IT OUT)

The European Commission has just announced an agreement whereby English will be the official language of the European Union rather than German, which was the other possibility. As part of the negotiations Her Majesty's Government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a 5 year phase-in plan that would be known as "Euro-English".

In the first year, 's' will replace the soft 'c'. Certainly, this will make the sivil servants jump with joy. The hard 'c' will be dropped in favour of the 'k'. This should klear up konfusion and keyboards can have one less letter.

There will be growing publik enthusiasm in the sekond year when the troublesome 'ph' will be replased with the 'f'. This will make words like 'fotograf' 20% shorter.

In the third year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling kan be expekted to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible. Governments will enkourage the removal of double leters which have always been a deterrent to akurate speling. Also al wil agre that the horibl mes of the silent 'e' in the languag is disgrasful and it should go away.

By the 4th yer peopl will be reseptiv to steps such as replasing 'th'with 'z' and 'w' with 'v'. During ze fifz yer, ze unesesary 'o' be dropd from vords kontaining 'ou' and similar changes vud of kors be aplid to oza kombinations of letas.

After ziz fifz yer ve vil have a rali sensibl riten styl. Zer vil be no mor trubl or difikultis and evrivun vil find it ezi tu anderstand ech oza. Ze drem of an united Urop vil finali kum tru!

CONCLUSION

"Every culture enjoys some form of humor. But, humor has difficulty crossing cultural boundaries because what is humorous in one country is often not humorous in another."

In cross cultural communication, humour is often used as a powerful speech act for breaking the ice, building relationships or diffusing a difficult situation. However, universal, the idea of "funny" is rarely translatable and is highly personal, context and culture specific. As a result many jokes, sarcastic or ironical remarks which may be deeply tied to culture are often unperceived, misunderstood or offensive.

Although laughter emergence from humour is a universal neurological event, what makes us laugh is dependent on many variables and therefore problematic to quantify, generalize or explain in relations to humor. Humor may produce other reactions besides laughter and laughter may not always be a sign of amusement. The challenge of understanding this has been the endless quest of many including jesters, bards, entertainers, writers, comedians, sociologists, psychologists, philosophers and linguists.

In conclusion, poor cross cultural awareness has many consequences, some serious others comical. It is imperative that in the global economy cross cultural awareness is seen a necessary investment to avoid such blunders as we have seen above.

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